



A WARREN MAGAZINE  
PCG

# CREEPY

## 1971 ANNUAL



**A SLITHERING SELECTION  
OF THE BEST IN TERROR TALES  
FROM THE EARLY ISSUES  
OF THE WORLD'S NO. 1 ILLUSTRATED HORROR MAGAZINE**



## FEAR HAS MANY FACES...

AND YOU'LL MEET THEM ALL IN THIS COLOSSAL COLLECTION OF THE VERY *BEST* IN ILLUSTRATED TERROR AND SUSPENSE FROM THE *FIRST SEVEN* ISSUES OF MY MONSTROUS MAG *CREEPY*! THRILL TO THE STORIES AND ARTWORK THAT FIENDS EVERYWHERE KNOW AND LOVE IN THIS COLLECTOR'S EDITION OF THE...

## CREEPY '71 ANNUAL





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**PROLOGUE:**

"AT FIRST, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING EXCEPT THE WOODS AROUND ME, BUT I **SENSE** SOMETHING... SOMETHING HUMAN! THEN THE GIRL APPEARS, WALKING WITH QUICK NERVOUS STEPS..."



"THE SMELL OF FEAR IS ON HER, GROWING AS THE NIGHT WIND MAKES THE TREES AND BRANCHES CREAK AND MOAN..."



"I CAN ALMOST HEAR HER HEART POUNDING... SHE HASN'T SEEN ME YET, BUT SHE STARTS TO RUN, SURELY SURE OF DANGER NEARBY..."



"HER HEAD PARTS FIRST THIS WAY, THEN THAT... STARTING AT EVERY SHADOW, EACH RATTLE OF DRY LEAVES SWEEP ACROSS THE GROUND..."



"THEN WHEN IT IS TOO LATE, SHE LOOKS TO THE BRANCHES ABOVE!"



WHAT'S UP MUST COME DOWN, EH, BREATHLESS BROWSERS? IT'S NOT A BIRD, NOT A PLANE, AND CERTAINLY NOT YOU KNOW WHO... YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A CREEPY CREATURE WHOSE TRADE IS BEGINNING TO BRANCH OUT... NOW, MEET THE...

# BEASTMAN!



...THE DREAM ENDED WITH THE  
THING KILLIN' THE GIRL, WALSH...  
LIKE A WILD BEAST! ONLY IT AINT'  
JUST A WILD BEAST...



IT'S  
ME!  
JUST A  
NIGHTMARE,  
AMES...  
SHOULDN'T  
LET A NIGHT-  
MARE UPSET  
YOU! EVERYBODY  
HAS 'EM.'



NOT LIKE THIS... NOT  
THIS **REAL**! AND I  
KEEP HAVIN' 'EM...  
EVER SINCE THE  
OPERATION! SHOULDN'T  
HAVE LET YOU AND  
DOC TALK ME INTO  
THAT OPERATION!



WHAT KINDA TALK  
IS THAT? WE  
SAVED YOUR LIFE  
...SAVED THE  
BUSINESS TOO!



ACROSS THE NIGHT  
AIR COMES THE  
SOUND OF STAMPING  
FEET... OF WHISTLES  
AND CAT-CALLS...  
NOISES OF THE  
IMPATIENT, THE  
UNRULY...



BUT THIS MORNING,  
WALSH... MY CLOTHES  
ALL RIPPED AND TORN  
...YOU SAY I DID IT  
IN MY SLEEP... YOU  
CAN'T BE **SURE**? MAYBE...

MAYBE NOTHIN'  
COMIN' BEFORE THE  
YOKELS TEAR THE  
TENT DOWN!

WHAT TOOK SO  
LONG, YA BIG APE?

HEY, GORILLA!  
TONIGHT YOU'RE  
GONNA LOSE YOUR  
HIDE!



DO THEY HAFTA  
CALL ME **THAT**?  
I HATE THAT  
NAME... HATE IT!

#100 TO ANYONE  
STAYING 3 ROUNDS  
WITH THE  
**GORILLA**

FORGET  
THE NAME,  
THINK OF  
THE TAKE!  
LOOKIT  
THIS CROWD  
...THE RUBES  
LOVE TO  
HATE YOU...

SHOULD'VE  
QUIT WHEN I  
WAS GOING  
TO... BEFORE  
THE OPERATION  
...THE DAY I  
TOLD WALSH...



**QUIT IT!** ARE YOU NUTS? WE'RE UNDER CONTRACT FOR THIS TOUR... IN DEBT FOR EQUIPMENT... ALREADY ADVERTISED IN CITIES ALONG THE ROAD...

SAW A SPECIALIST IN TOWN TODAY 'BOUT THOSE PAINS I'VE BEEN GETTING... SAYS IT'S MY HEART... SAYS IF I KEEP FIGHTIN' THEY'LL KEEP GETTIN' WORSE!



WALSH, I AINT CRAZY 'BOUT THIS CARNIVAL BUSINESS ANYHOW, NOW IT COULD KILL ME... NEVER BEEN MUCH ON THINKIN', BUT THERE MUST BE SOMEWAY AROUND IT...

BIG LUG LIKE YOU WITH A BUM TICKER... ALRIGHT, AM' RIGHT! I'LL FIGURE SOMETHIN' OUT!



AND WITHIN A WEEK, WALSH HAD THE ANSWER...

**T-THE DOC?** HE'S NOTHIN' BUT A VET FOR THE SHOW ANIMALS... AND A RUMMY TO BOOT!

HE WAS ALSO A BRILLIANT SURGEON BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES NAILED HIM FOR UNORTHODOX PRACTICES... **TRUST ME!**



WITH A BAD HEART, CERTAIN TO KILL IN A FEW YEARS, WHAT WAS THERE TO LOSE?

THIS SEDATIVE WILL PUT YOU OUT IN A FEW MINUTES... LET'S GET YOU IN TO THE OPERATING TABLE...

THERE'S NO SWEAT, AMES! I WOULDN'T RISK THIS IF I THOUGHT ANYTHING'D GO WRONG...



THE GRIP OF THE SEDATIVE WAS IMMEDIATE, ALLOWING ONLY ONE LAST QUICK GLIMPSE BEFORE OVERPOWERING...

**T-THE GORILLA**... THE ONE... THEY HAD TO SHOOT... THIS MORNING...

SHOOT? YES, BUT IN THE HEAD... HE STILL HAS A FINE, HEALTHY...



**-HEART!**



THE SOUND OF THE SONG DRIVES AMES'S TORTURED THOUGHTS BACK TO THE PRESENT... BACK TO THE GLOW OF OVERHEAD LIGHTS AND THE POUNDING LEATHER... HARD WILD PUNCHES RAIN IN ON HIM, TO BE IGNORED, SLUGGED OFF, AND RETURNED!



HE FIGHTS WITHOUT STYLE, WITHOUT TECHNIQUE, SLASHING AND JABBLING WITH AN INSTINCTIVE FURY... AN ANIMAL VIOLENCE THAT COMES NOT FROM TRAINING, BUT... *FROM THE HEART!*



THEN, IT IS ALL OVER, UNTIL THE NEXT TIME,  
THE NEXT TOWN...

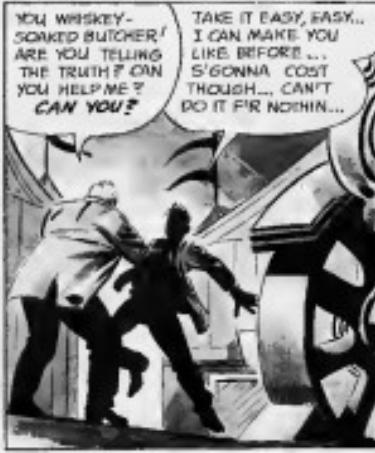
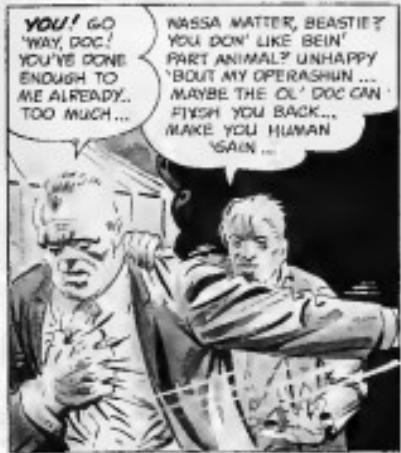
HERE'S YOUR CUT! YOU  
SHOULD GIVE THOSE  
LOCAL BOYS MORE OF  
CHANCE BEFORE  
FINISHING THEM...  
WE'RE GONNA RUN  
OUT OF TAKERS'

SOMETHIN' HAPPENS  
TO ME IN THE  
RING, WALSH...  
JUST LIKE IN  
THOSE DREAMS!  
I GO *WILD*...  
C-CAN'T HELP IT...  
EVER SINCE THE  
OPERATION!

I GET MORE  
LIKE AN  
ANIMAL  
EVERY  
DAY...

...AND NIGHTS I DON'T  
EVEN WANNA KNOW  
ABOUT!





THE CRIES OF THE MENAGERIE BEASTS ECHO ABOUT THE NOW DESERTED CARNIVAL GROUNDS FALLING ON UNINTERESTED EARS...

HA! THE BIG JERK LOOKED REALLY CONVINCED WHEN HE RAN OFF... REALLY BELIEVES HE TURNS INTO A GORILLA!



JUST LIKE HE REALLY BELIEVED HE HAD A BAD HEART!



RELUCTANT TO BELIEVE HE MIGHT LOSE HIS MEAL TICKET, WALSH HAD RECHECKED AMES'S CONDITION WITH THE HEART SPECIALIST...

BUT YOUR X-RAYS SHOW HIS TICKER'S OKAY! THE BIG APE LIED...

PHYSICALLY OKAY... SUBCONSCIOUSLY, HE HATES BOXING, TRIES TO ESCAPE IT WITH ATTACKS INDUCED BY HIS OWN MIND...

PSYCHOSOMATIC, BUT NO LESS FATAL... ONLY BY QUITTING CAN HE BE CURED!



YET THE VERY CAUSE OF AMES'S CONDITION SUGGESTED A CURE...

IF HE CONVINCED HIMSELF HE'S GOT A BUM HEART, HE CAN CONVINCE HIMSELF HE'S GOT A **NEW** HEART... THE HEART OF AN ANIMAL, MORE OF A FIGHTER THAN AMES COULD EVER BE!

THE CUT ON HIS CHEST'LL LOOK JUST LIKE AN INCISION WAS MADE... FAR AS HE'LL EVER KNOW, I **DID** OPERATE ON HIM TONIGHT!



A CURE THAT WOULD PREVENT HIS EVER TRYING TO QUIT AGAIN!

FROM TIME TO TIME I'LL GIVE HIM A SHOT OF THIS... THE LUG'LL THINK IT'S POST-OPERATIONAL TREATMENT! ACTUALLY IT PUTS HIM IN A TRANSCENDENT STATE, OPEN TO SUGGESTION...

AND THE THINGS I'M GONNA SUGGESTLL HAVE HIM CONVINCED HE'S MORE APE THAN MAN! HE WON'T BE FIT FOR ANYTHING BUT THIS RACKET!



RIPPING HIS CLOTHING AFTER THE DREAMS I SUGGESTED REALLY DID THE TRICK ON THE POOR BOOB...



NOW ALL I GOTTA DO IS KEEP DOC HAPPY SO HE DOESN'T SPILL THE BEANS!



DOC! HEY, YOU OLD RUMPOUT... LET'S GO INTO TOWN! HIT A FEW NIGHTSPOTS...

DOC?



@@@#@#!! DARK... WHEREZAI LIGHT CORD?





AS THE BONE-CRUSHING HANDS OF THE BEAST MAN CLOSE ON HIS CRUMPLING BODY, WALSH HAS NO TIME TO APPRECIATE THE AMAZING JOB HE HAS DONE IN RE-CHANNELING AMES'S PSYCHOSOMATIC NATURE... ONLY TIME TO SCREAM!



THE JUNGLE NIGHT  
WAS ALIVE WITH  
NOISES...THE SCREECH  
OF A MARAUDING OWL,  
THE MOCK LAUGHTER  
OF A STALKING  
HYENA...AND THE  
DESPERATE MOANS  
OF A MAN IN PAIN...

I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, HE DOESN'T  
RESPOND TO ANY TREATMENT. IT'S UNCANNY,  
UNNATURAL! BEST TO LEAVE HIM TIED UP TILL  
WE CAN MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO MOVE  
HIM! I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND...

HIS OWN STORY DOESN'T MAKE  
MUCH SENSE...DELIRIOUS THROUGH  
MOST OF THE TELLING...APPARENTLY,  
HE WANDERED INTO THE TABOO  
TERRITORY...



NATURALLY, CURIOUS DEVILS THAT WE ARE, WE'RE GOING TO VENTURE IN THE TABOO  
COUNTRY OURSELVES AND FIND OUT JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MOANING  
GENTLEMAN TO BRING HIM UNDER...



GAME HAD BEEN BAD FOR A WEEK, AND  
THE NIGHTS HUNT MOST FRUITLESS OF  
ALL. THE OTHERS HAD TURNED BACK, BUT  
STARK, INELIGENT, DETERMINED, ANGRY,  
HAD PUSHED ON...MUCH FURTHER THAN  
THE REST OF THE PARTY HAD EVER CARED,  
OR DARED TO GO...

STREAM AHEAD IS THE DIVIDING  
LINE...IF THE BEARERS ARE TO BE  
SHEVELED, BEYOND THAT IS BAD MEDICINE,  
FORBIDDEN...WHAT DRIVEL!

NO WONDER  
HUNTING'S BAD...  
STUPID SUPER-  
STITION CREATES  
A REFUGE FOR ALL  
THE GAME! TIME  
SOMETHING WAS  
DONE ABOUT IT...  
BY ME!



**BLAST!** THOUGHT SURE  
I'D BROUGHT HIM DOWN....

A HIDEOUS, ALMOST HUMAN,  
SHRIEK KNIFED THE STILL AIR,  
THEN THE BLOWG WAS SWALLOWED  
BY BRUSH AND FOLIAGE ACROSS  
THE STREAM...

STARK EDGED FORWARD TO THE SPOT  
WHERE THE CAT HAD DISAPPEARED. HE  
WAS ANXIOUS AND EXCITED, BUT KNEW  
TOO WELL THE DANGERS OF PLUNGING  
INTO THE BRUSH AFTER A WOUNDED  
ANIMAL....

CAN'T GO FAR.  
BLEEDING LIKE THAT...  
WON'T BE HARD  
TO TRACK...



THERE HAD BEEN NO SOUND, NO WARNING, GRIPPED WITH CHILL HORROR, OF THE UNKNOWN, BRAD STARKS EYES WIDENED IN DISBELIEF AT THE INCREDIBLE VISION MENACINGLY POSED BEFORE HIM.

FOR AN OUTSIDER TO TREAD THIS SACRED GROUND IS FORBIDDEN...

TO SLAY ONE OF MY SERVANTS... UNFORGIVEABLE!

STARK COULD NOT SPEAK. HIS THROAT WAS PARCHED, DRY... BUT HIS HANDS WERE MOIST, CLAMMY, AS THEY TIGHTLY GRIPPED HIS RIFLE...

DO NOT RAISE YOUR WEAPON! UNLESS YOU CHOOSE TO PERISH BEFORE THE FURY OF MY SERVANTS... RIPED TO SHREDS BY A WHIRLWIND OF CLAWS! I AM WILTHIGH PRIESTESS OF WASHTI, GODDESS OF CATS! YOUR FATE IS MINE TO DECIDE...

SLOWLY, STARK LET THE WEAPON SLIP FROM HIS FINGERS. HE COULD NEVER BEGIN TO BRING IT TO PLAY AGAINST ALL THE GLEAMING-EYED HORDE HE FACED. DESPERATELY, HIS MIND PROBED FOR A COURSE OF ACTION. HIS FINGERS BRUSHED A CIGARETTE LIGHTER INSIDE HIS JACKET...

WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO WITH ME?

YOUR BARBARY HAS COST THE LIFE OF ONE WHO SERVED ME WELL... WHAT PUNISHMENT COULD BE MORE FITTING THAN THAT... YOU TAKE HIS PLACE!

EVEN AS STARK'S LIPS BEGAN TO FORM THE WORD "HOW?", WILUTH MOVED FORWARD, LONG-NAILLED FINGERS STRETCHED TOWARD HIM, HER EYES, GLEAMING AND GLOWING, ALMOST HYPONOTICALLY... PROMISING MORE DANGER THAN ANY JUNGLE BEAST, YET RADIATING AN IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL. HE COULD SMELL THE RICHNESS OF HER FLESH, THE FRAGRANCE OF HER LUSH, FLOWING HAIR... HER LIPS, MOIST AND BRILLIANT, PARTED AND LIFTED UP TO HIS...

IT'S VERY SIMPLE...

ALL IT TAKES IS...

ONE KISS!



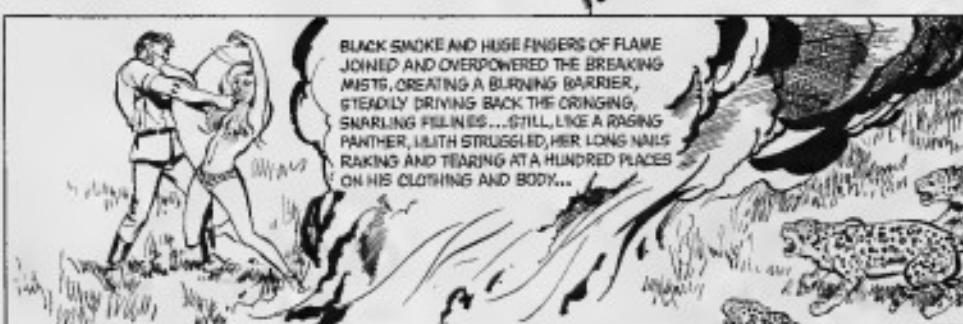


THE WILL TO SURVIVE RIPPED STARK TO HIS SENSES. HE GRAPPLIED HARD WITH THE GIRL, TEARING THE BRIGHT CRIMSON LIPS AWAY FROM HIS OWN BEFORE THEIR FIERY TOUCH COULD TURN HIM INTO ONE OF THE MAN-HAUNTED BEASTS NOW CROUCHED AND COILED TO SPRING...

BEFORE THOSE DAWN CATS GET ME, PRINCESS, THEY'LL HAVE TO CLAW THEIR WAY THROUGH YOU!



A TERRIBLE CHORUS OF WILD SNARLS AND VICIOUS CRIES FROM THE ANIMALS SPIT THE AIR ENOUGH TO PARALYZE A LESS DESPERATE MAN! IN HIS ARMS, LILITH BECAME AS A JUNGLE BEAST HERSELF, LASHING AND STRUGGLING WITH UNHOLY MIGHT, AS WITH ONE HAND, STARK FUMBLED WITH THE LIGHTER...



BLACK SMOKE AND HUGE FINGERS OF FLAME JOINED AND OVERPOWERED THE BREAKING MISTS, CREATING A BURNING BARRIER, STEADILY DRIVING BACK THE CRINKLING, SNARLING FELINES...STILL, LIKE A RAGING PANTHER, LILITH STRUGGLED; HER LONG NAILS RAKING AND TEARING AT A HUNDRED PLACES ON HIS CLOTHING AND BODY...



IF EVER HE'D HAD THE THOUGHT OF LETTING HER LIVE, RAGE WIPE IT AWAY AS STARK BATTERED AND HAMMERED AT THE WRITHING, CLAWING GIRL...HE SHORE THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH AS SHE BIT FIRST ONE OF HIS HANDS, THEN THE OTHER, AS THEY FOUGHT TO REACH THE SOFT WHITENESS OF HER THROAT...

SHE PANTHER! I'LL KILL YOU! KILL YOU!



BEYOND THE WALL OF FLAMES, STARK COULD ALMOST FEEL THE FRUSTRATED FURY OF THE TRAPPED ANIMALS AS THEY SCREAMED TO AID THE GIRL, WHO NOW BENT BACK HELPLESSLY AS HIS FINGERS FOUND THEIR MARK... HER GLOWING EYES GREW MOIST AND PAINT, HER VOICE BROWN A CHOKED, RAGING WHISPER...

YOU THINK YOU'VE ESCAPED THE CLAWS OF MY SERVANTS...THOUGH I DIE AT YOUR HAND, THOUGH YOU WALK FROM THIS GROUND...THE FATE IS STILL YOURS... SO I CURSE YOU, CURSE YOU...

EVEN AS THE WORDS WERE UTTERED, LIEUT. DIED. STARK TURNED AND FLED, THE HEAT OF HIS SELF-MADE INFERNO HICKOKS AT HIS BACK, THE PAINED ROARS OF THE JUNGLE CATS ECHOING IN HIS EARS...

STARK STAGGERED BACK THROUGH THE JUNGLE, HAUNTED BY ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM, STOPPING NEITHER TO SLEEP OR REST, EAT OR RELAX UNTIL HE REACHED THE CAMP...



N-NONE OF THOSE CATS'LL SURVIVE THE FIRE... HER CURSE'LL NEVER TOUCH ME... NEVER. I

THERE YOU ARE, OLD MAN, NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! THOSE SCRATCHES ALL LOOKED NASTY, BUT NONE OF 'EM WERE VERY DEEP... BE HEALED IN NO TIME!

BUT THEY FEEL FUNNY, BEANISH... THEY TINGLE, ITCH... AND MY HANDS, WHERE SHE BIT ME...



A LITTLE MORE SERIOUS, BUT NOTHING TO BE UPSET ABOUT... NO SIGN OF INFECTION...

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG! FINGERS FEEL SO STIFF... I CAN'T MOVE THEM!



THEN, THE DELIRIUM SET IN. ALL NIGHT LONG, STARK SHOUTED AND MUMBLED, AND WHEN MORNING CAME...

GOOD LORD, MAN! YOU'VE REOPENED ALL THE WOUNDS!

KEEP ITCHING, TINGLING... CAN'T STAND IT... MUST SCRATCH THEM... CAN'T STAND IT... MUST...



FINALLY, THE DOCTOR WAS CALLED IN...

MAKE IT STOP...CAN'T  
STAND THE ITCHING...  
MAKE IT STOP...MAKE  
IT STOP...

HAVE TO KEEP  
HIM BOUND, WON'T  
LEAVE THE  
WOUNDS ALONE...

THEY SHOULDN'T BE  
CALUSING HIM **THAT**  
MUCH TROUBLE...  
AND HIS **HANDS!** SO  
SNARLED AND DIS-  
COLORED...I JUST DON'T  
UNDERSTAND!

ALL WE CAN DO NOW  
IS MOVE HIM TO THE CITY,  
TO A HOSPITAL...EVEN  
THEN I...

AEEEEEEEEE!

STARK!

BOTH MEN RUSHED TO THE TENT, HEARTS POUNDING.  
FEARING WHAT THEY MIGHT FIND...FOR A TIME THEIR EYES  
BLINKED IN THE DARKNESS, SLOWLY GROWING ACCUSTOMED  
TO ITS DENSITY, SLOWLY GROWING AWARE OF THE HORROR  
WITHIN...

LORD HELP HIM! HE'S  
BROKEN THE ROPES...  
WERE TOO LATE!

EVEN IN THE DIM SHADOWS, BOTH MEN FLINCHED AT  
THE GORY SPECTACLE BEFORE THEM...

NO MAN COULD DO THAT TO  
HIMSELF...IT'S NOT PHYSICALLY  
POSSIBLE! IT'S AS THOUGH  
SOME WILD BEAST RIPPED  
HIM TO SHREDS...

I KNOW,  
DOCTOR, I  
KNOW...

...AND WHO'S TO SAY  
IT WASN'T??

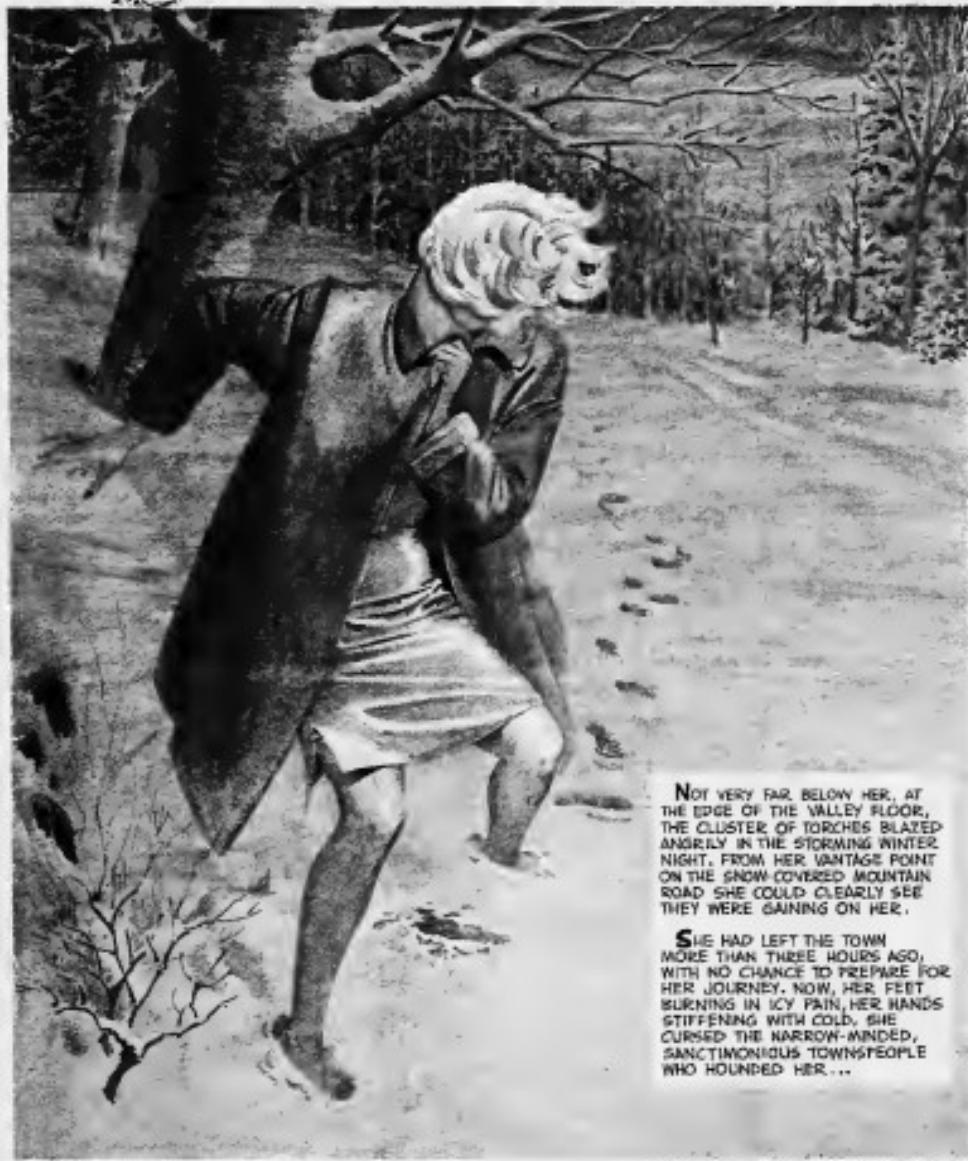


AND IF THAT ENDING DOESN'T TEAR YOU UP THEN  
YOU'D BETTER LOOK ALONG ON LITTLE CAT FEET AND SINK  
YOUR CLAWS INTO MY NEXT HORRENDOUS HOWLER...



HUSH, HEM! SO, MY FRIENDS OF THE ABYSS, HERE WE STAND ON THE PRECIPICE OF ANOTHER HORRIFYING TALE FROM OL' UNCLE CREEPY. THIS STORY CONCERN'S THE EVIL MACHINATIONS OF A WICKED WOMAN WHO TEMPTS FATE, OH...

# THE MOUNTAIN



NOT VERY FAR BELOW HER, AT THE EDGE OF THE VALLEY FLOOR, THE CLUSTER OF TORCHES BLAZED ANGRILY IN THE STORMING WINTER NIGHT. FROM HER VANTAGE POINT ON THE SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN ROAD SHE COULD CLEARLY SEE THEY WERE GAINING ON HER.

SHE HAD LEFT THE TOWN MORE THAN THREE HOURS AGO, WITH NO CHANCE TO PREPARE FOR HER JOURNEY. NOW, HER FEET BURNING IN ICY PAIN, HER HANDS STIFFENING WITH COLD, SHE CURSED THE NARROW-MINDED, SANCTIMONIOUS TOWNSPEOPLE WHO HOUNDED HER...

SHE TURNED FROM THE ROAD AND BEGAN TRIPPING UPWARD. IT WAS A GAMBLE, BUT THEY MIGHT NOT FOLLOW HER. IF SHE KEPT TO THE ROAD, SHE REASONED, IN A LITTLE MORE THAN AN HOUR'S TIME THEY WOULD CATCH HER ANYWAY...AND IF THEY DID, THEY MIGHT KILL HER...



GRASPING, SHE PAUSED TO REST, AND AS HER EYES SCANNED THE VALLEY BELOW, SHE SAW THE TRAIL OF TORCHES HEADING BACK TOWARD THE TOWN. THE TOWNSPEOPLE HAD GIVEN UP THE CHASE.

...BUNCH OF LOUSY DO-GODDERS! I'LL TEACH YOU TO RUN ME OUT OF TOWN! I'LL GET EVEN IF IT'S THE LAST THING I EVER DO!



FALLING AND STUMBLING, SHE CLAMBERED DESPERATELY THROUGH THE DRIFTS. SHE KNEW THIS WAS ONLY A SMALL MOUNTAIN AND THAT THERE WAS THE SAFETY OF ANOTHER TOWN ON THE OTHER SIDE. WITH A LITTLE LUCK, SHE COULD MAKE IT...



FOR LONG MINUTES SHE REMAINED THERE, BUT TO STAY THERE MEANT CERTAIN DEATH, SO SHE ONCE AGAIN BEGAN THE UPWARD CLIMB, TIME LIMPED INTO AN UNREAL DIMENSION. MECHANICALLY, SHE CLAWED HER WAY UP UNTIL DUMBLY, SHE WAS AWARE OF THE CABIN JUST AHEAD...



AT THE DOOR, SHE KNOCKED... AND IT WAS OPENED...



FROM THE DEPTHS OF A NIGHTMARISH DREAM, SHE AWOKE Sudden to the reality of her surroundings. A young, handsome man hovered over her...

DON'T BE AFRAID...  
MY NAME IS LUKE...  
HOW DO YOU  
FEEL?

WH...OH...OKAY, I GUESS.  
WHERE AM I? HOW...?



YOU'VE SLEPT MORE  
THAN FOURTEEN HOURS.  
HERE...DRINK THIS  
BRANDY. IT WILL  
WARM YOU.

WARM ME? ARE YOU  
KIDDING? THAT FIREPLACE  
FEELS LIKE A BLAST  
FURNACE! YOU... YOU  
LIVE HERE ALL ALONE?



YES, VERY MUCH ALONE. I'M A STUDENT...DOING SOME RESEARCH ON THE BLACK ARTS. BUT THE TOWNSPEOPLE DON'T TRUST ME AND NEVER COME HERE. THE FOOLS THINK MY INTEREST IN BLACK MAGIC IS EVIL...



ARE YOU KIDDING ME,  
BUSTER? I THOUGHT  
ALL THAT BLACK  
MAGIC STUFF WENT  
OUT WITH THE  
MIDDLE AGES!

NO, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN WITH  
US, BUT TODAY THERE ARE  
FEW WHO BELIEVE IN THE DARK  
POWERS. I'VE MADE SOME  
MARVELOUS DISCOVERIES...  
I CAN BEND A MAN'S WILL  
TO MINE IN A MATTER  
OF MOMENTS.



OH, HYPNOTISM.  
HUSH SAY, HANDSOME, IF  
YOU'RE ON THE  
LEVEL...YOU  
MIGHT BE ABLE  
TO HELP ME.

I'D BE GLAD TO HELP YOU, IF I  
CAN. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW NICE  
IT IS TO HAVE... I MEAN, I GET  
SO LONELY...



I KNOW, HONEY. THE PEOPLE  
IN THAT TOWN OUGHT TO BE  
HORSEWHIPPED...MAKING YOU  
STAY UP HERE! BUT WHAT  
CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

OH, WE COULD DO  
SOMETHING! IT'S  
SIMPLE! ALL WE  
NEED IS THE  
MAYOR!



**THE  
MAYOR!**

OF COURSE! YOU GET THE MAYOR TO COME HERE AND I CAN MAKE HIM DO ANYTHING YOU WANT! I'D GO MYSELF, BUT YOU CAN SEE I DON'T HAVE ANY CLOTHES!  
**I'D FREEZE!**



YEAH, BUT...  
THE MAYOR...  
I DON'T KNOW...

IM ONLY TRYING TO HELP YOU. THEY'LL NEVER EXPECT YOU TO GO BACK THERE. AND YOU INDONT HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF **ANYTHING...**  
WITH **THIS!**



LATE THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, AFTER A COLD AND BITTER JOURNEY DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN, SHE HUDDLED IN THE SHADOWS UNTIL THE MAYOR'S CAR TURNED SLOWLY INTO THE DRIVEWAY AND CAME TO A STOP, THEN...

**YOU?!** YOU BRAZEN HUSSEY! HOW DARE YOU...

**BE QUIET,** YOU PURITANICAL OLD FOOL! IF YOU WANT TO LIVE, TURN THIS CAR AROUND AND DRIVE EXACTLY WHERE I SAY!



FEARFULLY, THE MAYOR DID AS HE WAS TOLD. THE CAR CREST SILENTLY FROM THE TOWN, ACROSS THE VALLEY AND UP THE MOUNTAIN ROAD UNTIL, WITH WHEELS SPINNING AND MOTOR WHINING, IT STALLED IN THE DRAFTS. FROM THERE, THEY CONTINUED ON FOOT...



LABORIOUSLY, THEY CLIMBED THE REMAINING DISTANCE AND STUMBBLED HEAVILY INTO THE CABIN...

PLEASE... REST... LET ME REST...

OF COURSE,  
MR. MAYOR...  
**DO SIT  
DOWN...**



I PROMISE YOU, YOUR WEARINESS SHALL NEVERMORE CONCERN YOU!

WHY... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

**AAGHHH!**





WHY...  
STUPID?!  
WHY...

**STUPID**, I SAY! BLIND AND STUPID!  
DO YOU THINK I WANT TO POSSESS THIS  
EMPTY SHELL OF A MAN SO I CAN LIVE  
IN HIS HOUSE? DO YOU THINK I CARE  
ABOUT POLITICS OR WEALTH OR,  
EVEN **FAME**?



FOOLISH GIRL! THE ONLY WAY I COULD EVER LEAVE THIS CABIN WAS TO HAVE SOMEONE WHOSE BODY I COULD ENTER, WHOSE MIND I COULD CONTROL... AND YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME THAT SOMEONE!



SEE, LUKE, THAT'S **GREAT!** WE'VE GOT IT MADE! NOW WE CAN LIVE RIGHT IN THE MAYOR'S HOUSE / WE'LL GET ANYTHING WE WANT! WE'LL RUN THE WHOLE TOWN!



HEY...WHAT'S  
WRONG? YOU...  
YOU'RE  
DIFFERENT...

YOU THOUGHT TO USE ME AS A  
TOOL TO GAIN YOUR REVENGE,  
BUT YOU MISJUDGED ME ! I  
DON'T CARE A FIG FOR YOU OR  
YOUR REVENGE ! IT WAS I  
WHO MADE USE OF YOU !



**I  
WARNED  
YOU!**

A black and white comic book illustration of a woman with a shocked expression, surrounded by multiple instances of the word "BLAM!" written in a bold, stylized font.

**HA! HA HA HA!**  
BULLETS CAN'T  
HURT ME, WOMAN!  
YOU CAN'T STOP  
ME AND WHEN I  
FINISH WITH YOU,  
**I'LL BE FREE!**

**PLEASE! STOP!**  
**LEAVE ME ALONE!**  
**LEAVE ME ALONE!**  
**DON'T...**

NOW I'LL BE FREE TO ROAM  
THE TOWN... THE **WORLD!**  
**FREE! FREE!**

**...FREE TO  
SHARE MEN'S  
SOULS!**

**MAAAGG**

**H H H H H H H H**

HER SHRIEKING  
SCREAMS WERE LOST  
IN THE ROAR OF  
FLAMES. THERE WAS  
NO FLOOR TO THE  
FIREPLACE, AND SHE  
FELL DOWN... DOWN...  
EVER DEEPER INTO  
THE FIRES OF HADES,  
HER TORTURED FLESH  
SEARING WITH THE  
AGONY OF OBLIVION,  
HER EARS RINGING  
WITH LUCIFER'S  
TRIUMPHANT, MANIACAL  
LAUGHTER...

HEH! HEH!  
HOT STUFF.  
HUH, GANG! I'M  
NOT GOING TO  
MAKE ANY PUNS  
ABOUT HOW  
**BURNED UP**  
OUR LITTLE GAL  
WAS... BUT SHE'LL BE  
REMEMBERED  
**AS A REAL**  
**HOT NUMBER!**  
THE DEVIL,  
YOU SAY?





Come now to Merry Olde England. It's the year 1820. The medical profession is making great strides forward. In fact, it is about to overtake two gentlemen involved in a...

# GRAVE UNDERTAKING

ALEXANDER  
TOTH

BUSINESS COULDN'T BE WORSE, MR. PEACH! NOTHING BUT BILLS!

IT'S THE COMPETITION, MR. THWACKUM! TWO UNDERTAKING ESTABLISHMENTS AND HARDLY DEATHS ENOUGH FOR ONE!

TODAY THEY BURIED RICH WIDOW BOSS!! SUCH A FINE SERVICE.. SUCH A SPLENDID CASKET.. SUCH A HANDSOME PROFIT!!

UNJUST, MR. PEACH! THEY GET ALL THE BUSINESS WHILE WE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE!

A-HEM!



GENTLEMEN! I AM DR. RYDER, CHIEF OF SURGERY AT THE MEDICAL SCHOOL... I'VE A PROPOSITION THAT MAY HELP YOU AS WELL AS ME!



THE MEDICAL SCHOOL IS IN DIRE AND CONSTANT NEED FOR CADAVERS IN OUR RESEARCH... WE'RE PREPARED TO PAY HANDSOMELY FOR ANY SPECIMENS YOU MAY PROVIDE!

HOW CAN WE PROVIDE YOU? THERE AIN'T BUSINESS TO PROVIDE US!



IN YOUR TRADE, PERHAPS SOMETHING WILL COME TO YOU... MY OFFER STANDS FOR ANY TRADE. YOU MIGHT DIG UP! GOOD NIGHT, GENTLEMEN!

GOOD NIGHT, SIR!

THIS IS OUR BIG OPPORTUNITY, MR. PEACH! HE'S GIVEN ME AN IDEA!



WHAT'S THE GOOD, MR. THWACKUM? WE HAVEN'T A BODY TO BURY LET ALONE SELL!

AYE, MR. PEACH, WE'VE NONE... BUT I'M THINKING OF A SPOT THAT'S WELL STOCKED FOR THIS NEW SIDELINE...



...UP THERE!!

COO! WHAT A  
HEAVY ONE! (RUF)  
DOCTORS'LL BE  
SUSPICIOUS IF  
WE'VE GRABBED  
ONE. THAT'S  
TOO RIPE,  
MR.  
THWACKUM!

THAT'S  
WHY I'VE  
PICKED  
WIDOW  
BOGGS,  
MR.  
PEACH..  
FRESH  
PUT AWAY  
TODAY!

AN' STILL  
WEARIN' ALL  
HER FINE  
JEWELS, MR.  
THWACKUM!

SHE'LL HAVE SCARCE  
USE FOR THOSE ON THE  
SURGEON'S TABLE!

WHAT'S  
THIS?  
MONSTERS!  
GHOUls!!

HE'S DEAD!  
COO, MR.  
THWACKUM!  
WHAT'VE  
WE  
DONE?

DONE, MR. PEACH? WHY  
WE'VE DOUBLED OUR PROFIT.  
THAT'S WHAT WE'VE DONE!

WELL DONE, GENTLEMEN!  
TWO FINE SPECIMENS!  
MEDICAL SCIENCE IS  
ADVANCED AND YOU  
TURN A FINE PROFIT.  
KEEP UP THE GOOD  
WORK!



Encouraged by success, Thwackum and Peach rushed headlong into the resurrection business... And when nature was slow to produce the 'goods'...



THA' PLACE! SUMPIN'S QUEER THER'! ALWASH DYIN'! EVER' NIGHT! LASH NIGHT... SIX! GETTIN' OUT 'FORE I, DII! NEVER GOIN' BACK! THASH RIGH'...

PITY!  
POOR FELLOW!  
LET'S DRINK  
ON THAT, MR.  
PEACH!

RIGHT  
YOU ARE!  
MORE  
ALE!!

EVER' BODY DIE!  
SIXSH MORE! NEV'  
GOIN' DRINK UP!  
MORE ALE! WHERE  
WE GOIN', GENTSF?

EASY... DOES... IT!

ARRRGHHHKK!

STEADY!  
JUST A  
LITTLE  
FURTHER...  
EASY  
DOES  
IT!



HARD WORK, MR. PEACH!  
STRAINS THE HEART! AND  
EXPENSIVE.. ALL THAT MONEY  
FOR ALE! IF ONLY WE  
LIVED IN THIS FELLOW'S  
VILLAGE...

SIX DEAD  
LAST NIGHT!  
A RUDDY  
TREASURE,  
MR.  
THWACKUM!  
NOT REALLY  
THAT FAR..  
COME DAWN I  
COULD HITCH  
UP THE VAN  
AND...

The next day...

WE'VE MADE  
TOO MUCH HASTE,  
MR. PEACH! IT'S  
STILL DAYLIGHT!

B-BUT LOOK! WINDOWS.. DOORS..  
BOLTED AND SHUTTERED TIGHT?  
THEY'RE AFRAID TO COME OUT,  
MR. THWACKUM!

AND THE GRAVEYARD!  
UNWATCHED AND  
UNPROTECTED!

STILL LIGHT!  
DO YOU THINK  
SOMEONE  
FROM THE  
VILLAGE  
MIGHT...  
?

AS YOU SAID... THEY'RE  
AFRAID TO COME OUT!  
IT'S A FIELD DAY,  
MR. PEACH... A  
FIELD DAY!

THIS IS THE  
LAST THAT CAN  
FIT! A VAN  
FULL AT 10  
POUNDS A  
HEAD, MR.  
THWACKUM!

A FINE DAY'S WORK, MR. PEACH!

WE'LL EMPTY  
RYDER'S PURSE  
WITH THIS LOT!  
SHOULD KEEP  
HIM AND MEDICAL  
SCIENCE BUSY  
FOR SOME  
TIME!

SPECIMENS GALORE  
FOR YOU TONIGHT,  
DR. RYDER! A  
WHOLE VAN  
FULL!

MARVELOUS!  
HOW DID YOU  
MANAGE  
THIS?

IN HERE!  
NO ONE  
CAN SEE  
YOU  
UNLOAD!

I CAN'T  
BELIEVE IT!  
I MUST  
SEE FOR  
MYSELF!  
HOW DID  
YOU DO  
IT???

AN UNFORTUNATE VILLAGE, SIR...  
TRAGIC MISAPPENINGS...

TUT, TUT,  
MR. PEACH'  
TRADE  
SECRETS!

GOOD LORD! YOU IMBECILES!  
THAT VILLAGE... THOSE  
DEATHS... IT WAS THE  
WORK OF...

Gets you  
right in the  
neck, eh, CREEPS?  
Just goes to  
prove... there's  
nothing like  
your own YARD,  
no matter how  
GRAVE! Now  
get set to  
UNDERTAKE my  
next bit of fear-  
some fiction...

VAMPIRES!!

YAAAAHHHHHH





NOW, A FEARSOME FROLIC INTO THE DARK AGES FOR SOME DARK DOINSS... HOPE ALL YOU HYSTERICAL HISTORIANS WILL ENJOY THE REEKING RESERVATIONS I'VE PREPARED FOR YOU AT...

# CASTLE CARRION!

RAIN FELL IN TORRENTS OUT OF THE BLACK SKY, LASHING ERIC OF URien AND HIS NERVOUS, SHYING MOUNT WITH ICY PELLETS... THE SOUND OF THE STORM RISING IN COMPETITION TO THE DIN ERIC RAISED WITH THE GREAT IRON RING AGAINST THE DECAYING TIMBERS OF THE CASTLE GATE...



FOR LONG MOMENTS ONLY THE RAIN ANSWERED ERIC'S EFFORTS, THEN HE FELT A WARRIOR'S DISCOMFORT OF A STRANGE DAZE UPON HIM, AND A DRY RATTLE OF A VOICE KNIFED EFFORTLESSLY TO HIM THROUGH THE DOWN POUR...



AS YOU WILL  
THEN... ENTER!

"WHAT MANNER OF PLACE  
IS THIS? THE STENCH OF  
DEATH AND DECAY HOVERS  
AS IN THE AIR OF A CHARNEL  
HOUSE... MY HAND SHALL  
NOT STRAY FAR FROM MY  
SWORD HILT THROUGH THIS  
NIGHT'S LODGING!"

COME, MY  
MASTER  
AWAITSS YOU!



TRULY ROME'S GREAT  
CATACOMBS OFFER MORE  
CHEER THAN THESE  
CRUMBLING WALLS! HE  
WHO WOULD CALL HIMSELF  
MASTER OF THIS  
MANOR MUST BE  
STRANGE indeed...

TAKE CARE, SIR KNIGHT!  
YOU WALK IN A REALM  
OF EVIL!



ERIC WHIRLED, ONLY TO FEEL HIMSELF RESTRAINED BY A CHILL TOUCH, AS THOUGH A HAND OF ICE GRIPPED HIS SHOULDER...

HOLD! NONE  
MAY SPEAK WITH  
THE LADY ELAINE...  
IT IS FORBIDDEN!



ERIC'S BLADE FLASHED, BUT FROZE MID-STROKE AT THE FEARFUL SIGHT OF THAT WHICH HE ATTACKED...

DEVIL'S WORK!



NOT WHILE I'VE  
SWORD IN HAND AND  
STRENGTH OF ARM!



I AM MAGNUS THE  
MAGICIAN! YOU SOUGHT  
THE SHELTER OF MY GATE,  
YET YOU DARE FORCE  
YOURSELF ON MY  
DAUGHTER, YOU DARE  
TAKE SWORD TO MY  
SERVANTS?!



IS THIS  
HOW MY  
HOSPITALITY  
IS HONORED?

MY BLADE IS RAISED  
TO ANY OBSCENITY  
SUCH AS THAT YOU  
CALL SERVANT! AS  
FOR THE LADY...

I CAME TO HIM, FATHER!  
YOU SURROUND ME WITH  
LONG DEAD HORRORS  
ANIMATED BY YOUR MAGIC,  
AND EXPECT ME NOT TO  
RUSH TO THE FIRST BREATH  
OF LIFE VISITED ON THIS  
PALACE OF DECAY? I--

ENOUGH, ELAINE!

GO TO YOUR  
ROOM!

NO ONE SHOULD BE HELD  
IN THIS FOUL BED OF  
SORCERY AS HE DOES HIS  
OWN DAUGHTER! GIVEN TIME  
AND CHANCE, I MAY FREE HER  
OF THIS CARRION HOUSE!



AWAY WITH YOUR  
WEAPON, ERIC OF  
URIEN, AND I'LL  
ATTEND YOU, THERE'S  
MUCH YET OF MY  
CASTLE FOR A  
GUEST TO VIEW...

BE WARNED, MAGICIAN!  
MY SWORD IS SHEATHED  
BUT QUICK TO HAND...  
I'VE LITTLE STOMACH  
FOR THE CREATIONS OF  
YOUR DARK POWERS!



I MERELY MAKE USE OF WHAT IS HERE  
---THIS CASTLE, THOSE WHO ONCE  
PEOPLED IT... BUT YOU WERE UNIMPRESSED  
WITH MY SERVANT... PERHAPS A WARRIOR  
LIKE YOURSELF WOULD BE MORE  
INTRIGUED BY...



THINK I COULDN'T GUESS YOUR THOUGHTS...  
...SUSPECT YOU'D HOPE TO CARRY AWAY  
ELAINE? SHE'S TOO FOOLISH TO APPRECI-  
ATE WHAT I'VE GIVEN HER, AND YOU'LL **DIE**  
FOR HOPING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT!!



WELL STRUCK, SIR KNIGHT!  
BUT TO WHAT AVAIL...?



...THEY'RE ALREADY DEAD! YOU  
CAN SLOW THEM, ENCUMBER THEM, BUT  
WHILE THERE'S DOME TO STAND ON,  
THEY'LL RISE TO FIGHT AGAIN! YOUR  
SWORD WILL SHATTER BEFORE  
THEY DO!!



THEN LET ME SAW  
MY STEEL AND TRY...  
**YOUR FLAME!**



CURSE THE MAGICIAN'S  
BLACK SKILLS! EVEN THE  
FIRE ONLY SLOWS THEIR  
ATTACK... I'VE PURCHASED  
BUT SCANT TIME!



MY LADY! IF YOU WOULD ESCAPE THIS HOUSE OF WALKING DEAD, DECIDE NOW! WE MUST MOVE QUICKLY!

THERE IS LITTLE TO DECIDE! LONG YEARS HAVE I YEARNED TO BE FREE OF MY FATHER'S HOLD, TO ABANDON THE CASTLE AND ITS CARRION ATMOSPHERE!

ERIC SLAMMED HOME THE BOLT ON THE DOOR. ALREADY THERE WERE SOUNDS ON THE STAIRS...

PRAY IT HOLDS LONG ENOUGH TO SERVE OUR NEEDS. WHAT LINEN YOU HAVE MUST BE CUT INTO STRIPS...



WITH FEVERISH FINGERS, ERIC AND ELAINE BENT TO THEIR TASK DRIVEN BY THE BRUTE ASSAULT OF BONY FISTS AND BODIES ON THE EVER WEAKENING DOOR...

LONG ENOUGH TO REACH THE BATTLEMENT ... IF IT HOLDS! GET READY, MY LADY...



A SICKENING SOUND OF SPLINTERING WOOD SPLIT THROUGH THE TOWER ROOM...



ASSAILED BY THE FULL FURY OF WIND AND RAIN, THEY INCHED DOWN THE FRAGILE ESCAPE LINE... FROM THE WINDOW ABOVE, ERIC HEARD A VOICE, SHATTERING WITH MENACE THROUGH THE STORM...

URJEN WHELP,  
YOU'VE SEALED YOUR  
DOOM! YOU'LL DIE  
IN THE AIR WHERE  
YOU DANGLE! FOR IN  
THE LAND OF THE  
CARRION...

...THE VULTURE IS KING!



DESPERATELY ERIC LOOSENERED HIS GRIP, SLIDING FASTER AND FASTER TOWARD THE STONE FLOOR OF THE BATTLEMENT... BUT NOT NEARLY FAST ENOUGH TO ESCAPE THE PLANNING FURY OF WINGED EVIL!

FOR ONE PITIFUL INSTANT, ERIC DARED HOPE MAGNUS WAS DESTROYING HIMSELF IN A MAD GESTURE, ONLY TO WITNESS A HIDEOUS TRANSFORMATION BRING SHARP CLAWED DEATH SWEEPING DOWN AT THEM.



A BLURRED TERRIBLE FORM HURLED AT HIM, EVER LARGER AND CLOSER... HIS LEGS TREMBLED, NAUSEA SWEEPED THROUGH HIM... IT WAS ALL HE COULD DO TO GRIP THE SWORD WITH BOTH HANDS AND RAISE IT IN FRONT OF HIM...



...AND AGAIN HE WITNESSED A TERRIBLE TRANSFORMATION...



FAREWELL, SORCERER! YOU CRUMBLE TO THE SAME FATE AS MUST ALL YOUR CHARGES HELD IN LIVING DEATH BY YOUR SPELLS...

YOUR FATHER'S POWER IS BROKEN, ELAINE, HIS MAGIC NO LONGER HOLDS CLAIM... YOU'RE FREE, ELAINE, NOW YOU'RE --- **ELAINE!!!**



THE WILDERNESS OF THE STORM HAD LAPSED INTO A SLOW STEADY RAIN, GRADUALLY WASHING AWAY THE MOST PERFECT OF MAGNUS THE MAGICIAN'S ART... THE LONG DEAD DAUGHTER HE'D CREATED A FORTRESS OF FEAR TO PROTECT...



STEP RIGHT UP, FEAR FANCIERS, AND GET ON LINE FOR YOUR TERROR TICKETS INTO THE MACABRE MUSEUM OF CLAUDE RENAIS, WHERE EACH AND EVERY FEAR-INSPIRING EXHIBIT IS A TERRIFYING...

# IMAGE IN WAX!

HOW CAN YOU DO IT, RENAIS? I'VE WORKED FOR YEARS IN MY OWN MUSEUM AND NEVER ACHIEVED SUCH REALISM! THESE GROTESQUES, THESE MONSTROUS-ITIES... HOW DO YOU DO IT?!

MY METHODS ARE MY OWN, MONSIEUR VIGO. I DO NOT DISCUSS THEM. NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I HAVE MANY VISITORS TO ATTEND TO!



THE OWNER OF THE POPULAR PARIS MUSEUM TURNS AND STRIDES STIFFLY AWAY FROM GERARD VIGO, HIS CHIEF COMPETITOR. SMARTING FROM THE CURT DISMISSAL, VIGO CAN ONLY MOVE MOODILY AMONG THE LOOMING EXHIBITS, STARING NOW AT THE BESTIAL FURY OF A WEREWOLF, NOW THE GHOUls CARNAL SAWAERY, NOW THE MENACING GLOWER OF A SORCERER... AND WITH EACH VIEWING HIS DEPRESSION AND RESENTMENT GROWS...



RENAIS IS RUNNING ME! WHO'LL PAY TO SEE MY HISTORICAL TABLEAUS, MY LIFELESS REENACTMENTS OF FAMOUS CRIMES, WHEN THEY CAN HAVE THIS??!



LOOK AT THEM! CROWDING LIKE CATTLE... I WAS IN BUSINESS BEFORE HIM, IT SHOULD BE MY PLACE THEY'RE AT, AND IT STILL COULD, IF ONLY RENAISS WOULD GIVE ME SOME HINT, SOME CLUE...

VIGO ELBOWS HIS WAY TO CLAUDE RENAISS, PUSHING CLOSE TO THE ALOOF, IMPASSIVE FORM, PLEADING DESPERATELY TO GAIN THE ATTENTION OF THOSE UNBLINKING, DISTANT EYES...



SUDDENLY VIGO IS TALKING TO THE BACK OF RENAISS'S COAT AS THE MUSEUM OWNER MOVES AWAY IN HIS RIGID, UNBENDING WALK...



RENAIS, I'M DESPERATE! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME... I'LL GIVE EVERY FRANC I'VE GOT TO LEARN... PLEASE!



CLOSING TIME! CLAUDE RENAISS SOLEMNLY STANDS GUARD AT THE ENTRANCE, WATCHING PATIENTLY UNTIL THE LAST STRAGGLER IS HERDED THROUGH...



OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM, NIGHT BEGINS TO OVERTAKE PARIS. WITHIN, RENAISS MOVES WITH HIS MEASURED STRIDE FROM LAMP TO LAMP, SMOOTHERING THEIR FLAMES...



WITH THE LAST LAMP DARK, HIS FOOTSTEPS ECHO ACROSS THE EMPTY MUSEUM AS HE GOES THROUGH THE DOOR TO THE WORK ROOM IN BACK OF THE MAIN GALLERY...



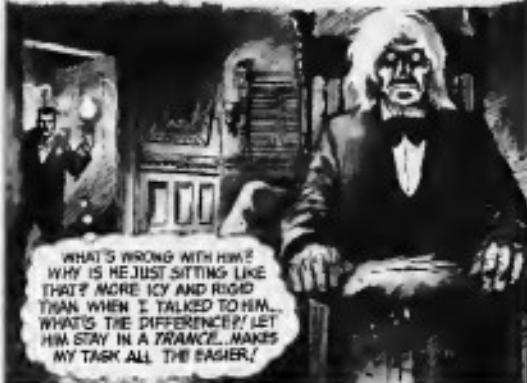
LEAVING THE MISSHAPEN MONSTER FORMS ALONE IN THE SHADYED DARKNESS, SILENT AND FORBODING...



QUICKLY AND QUIETLY GERARD VIGO EASES OUT OF HIS HIDING PLACE THROUGH GROTESQUE SHADOWS CAST BY THE GRUESOME IMAGES, TO THE NEAREST WALL LAMP...

FIRE WILL DO IT! ONE ROARING FIRE AND RENAISS MONSTERS WILL NO LONGER BE COMPETITION FOR ME! FIRST I'VE GOT TO MAKE CERTAIN THEIR CREATOR CAN'T SAVE THEM!

REMOVING THE LAMP FROM ITS FIXTURE, VIGO INCHES OPEN THE DOOR TO THE WORKROOM...



THE BLUNT, MONOTONE VOICE IS LIKE A COLD KNIFE TWISTED IN HIS SPINE, VIGO SQUIRMS UNEASILY; HE RETREATS...



WITH A DESPERATE, PITYFUL CRY, VIGO HURLS THE LIGHTED LAMP IN HIS HAND...



THE FLAMES SUDDENLY WREATH THE ADVANCING FIGURE, FEEDING ON THE VERY FLESH AND CLOTHING OF CLAUDE RENAISS, THEIR ALL CONSUMING HEAT WORKING A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE TRANSFORMATION.



SHRIEKING WITH HORROR AT THE MELTING VISION BEFORE HIM, VIGO FALLS BACK AGAINST THE WORKROOM DOOR...



SLOWLY, SO VERY SLOWLY, THE HINGES SHRIEK AND CRY, THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...





THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE USUAL CROWD OF EARLY SIGHTSEERS AND TOURISTS GATHERS BEFORE THE DOORS, ONLY TO FACE A DISAPPOINTING NOTICE...



YET, AS PROMISED, THE DISAPPOINTMENT IS ONLY TEMPORARY, AND WITHIN A FEW DAYS...

NOTHING'S CHANGED,  
THEY DIDN'T HURT IT  
AS I FEARED. IT'S  
JUST AS GOOD  
AS BEFORE...



I FELT THE SAME WAY  
WHEN I HEARD OF THE  
CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP... BUT  
IT'S TRUE... VISO IS SETTING  
THE SAME HIGH STANDARDS  
AS REHAIS!

INDEED, THE ONLY TRULY NOTICEABLE CHANGE SEEKS TO BE IN VISO HIMSELF: NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUCCESSES SEEMING TO MAKE HIM MORE ALDOP AND IMPASSIVE, STIFF AND UNNATURAL IN BEARING.



...AND IT IS MOST DIFFICULT TO GAIN THE ATTENTION OF THOSE UNBLINKING, DISTANT EYES...



YES, INDEED, GHOUlish GLANCERS, I'M AFRAID THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAS TURNED MONSIEUR VISO INTO A BIT OF A STIFF... OF COURSE IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR HIM TO CHANGE... JUST WAIT UNTIL THE FIRST REALLY HOT DAY! HEE, HEE, HEE!



SHARPEN UP THOSE CANINES FOR A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MORSEL, FRIENDS! HEE HEE! THIS ONE'S A FAIRY TALE OF SORTS... ONLY THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE, SO WE'LL HAVE TO STEP INTO THE SEAMIER SIDE OF TOWN IF WE WANT TO BE IN ON...

# THE RESCUE OF THE MORNING MAID!



Boyette  
ROBERT

HE WAS A CREATURE OF DARKNESS - NATURE HAD RENDERED HIM UNABLE TO MINGLE WITH OTHER MEN BY THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY - LEST THEY RUN FROM HIM IN ABSTRACT TERROR!

EVERY NIGHT HE EMERGED FROM HIS HIDING PLACE - ROAMING WITH EERIE STEALTH ON THE ROOFTOPS OF THE CONDEMNED AND DESERTED BUILDINGS!



LIKE A PROWLING BEAST - HE SILENTLY DREW UP TO THEM AND LISTENED TO THEIR CONVERSATION!



MY DOLL HAS A TORN HEAD, MA!

SHUT UP WITH YER STINKIN' DOLL, YOU! AND DON'T CALL ME MA!



YA YA KNOCKED IT OVER THE ROOF!

GOOD! NOW MAYBE Y'LL SHUT YER FACE WHEN I TELL YA!



I WANT MY DOLLY! I WANT MY DOLLY!

STOP THAT WHIMPERRIN', EMMA - OR I'LL LAY INTA YA LIKE A BUTCHER IN A COWPIN'



THE LITTLE GIRL STIFLED HER SOBS, BUT THE TEARD CONTINUED, SOAKING HER TINY HANDS AND SOILED SKIRT!

SHE'S CRYIN'! I KNEW SHE WAS DIFFERENT! SHE AINT LIKE THE OLD HAGS - NOT LIKE ME, NEITHER! WE'RE NIGHT PEOPLE, US TWO! BUT EMMA -



EMMA! SHE'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I SEEN IN ALL MY LIFE!

HE MOVED SILENT AS A PHANTOM, TO WHERE HE COULD PEER BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS!

THERE'S HER DOLLY!



SO LONG HAD HE MINGLED WITH THE GLOOM OF THE RAT-INFESTED SLUM THAT HE KNEW HIS WAY IN SPITE OF THE DARKNESS...

POOR THING! SHE OUGHT TO HAVE HER DOLLY BACK! SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CRY LIKE THAT!



THE OLD HAG AIN'T WATCHIN'! I'LL JUST PUT IT DOWN - AND SLIP BACK INTO THE SHADOWS!

ONE FOUND IT!

NOW SHE KNOWS... SHE AINT ALONE!



IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD TO KNOW YA AINT ALONE! AT LEAST IT IS FOR THE DAYTIME PEOPLE!

U.S. NIGHT PEOPLE DON'T HAVE FEELINGS! BUT A LITTLE GIRL WITH THE BRIGHTNESS OF MORNING IN HER EYES AINT THE SAME!



HIS HEART ACHED FOR THE GIRL AS HE WATCHED... SHOULD HE STEP FORWARD TO HIS PR. THAT HE LET HIMSELF BE SEEN?



I REMEMBER NOW!  
YOU - YOU'VE IMPRISONED  
ME - IN THIS CHILD'S BODY!  
MADE ME A SLAVE - MADE  
ME LIVE IN HORRID SQUALOR!

I'VE DONE THAT AND  
MORE, YOU WRETCHED,  
ACCURSED LITTLE DOLT!

"I'VE KEPT YOU IN BOND-  
AGE FOR AGE AFTER AGE!  
I'VE DRAGGED YOU THROUGH  
THE WORST BLUMPS OF THE  
WORLD - LENT YOUR BODY  
TO DISEASE AND ROT!"

EVER SINCE THE  
DAY YOU DARED  
TO STEAL THE MAN  
I LOVED... YOU'VE  
SUFFERED AS NO  
ONE ELSE HAS  
EVER SUFFERED  
BEFORE!

"I WAS THE MIGHTIEST  
SORCERESS - THE MOST  
EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL  
WOMAN - THAT THE WORLD  
HAD EVER KNOWN!"

"ANYTHING I WANTED WAS MINE! BUT, LIKE  
A FOOL, I FELL IN LOVE! IT WAS YOU, EMMA  
- YOU STOLE HIS HEART AWAY!"

DON'T YOU REMEMBER HOW I  
KEPT THE TWO OF YOU IMPRISONED?  
HOW HE FOUND HIS WAY  
OUT - HELPED YOU ESCAPE?  
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?



YOU BOTH KNEW THERE'D NEVER BE ANY SAFETY FROM MY PITLESS WRATH - AND SO YOU TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH THE INVOLUBLE DOOR OF DEATH!



HE WAS BEYOND THE REACH OF MY FURY - BUT FATE HAD DELIVERED YOU INTO MY HANDS - AND HERE YOU'VE REMAINED FOR CENTURIES!



MY VENGEANCE WILL GO ON, EMMA! ETERNALLY! YOU'LL NEVER BE FREE TO TRAVEL THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF DESTINY!

**HEEE**

SUDDENLY, THE WILD EYES OF THE ANCIENT FIEND WERE FIXED UPON....

ONCE EVERY MONTH, WHEN THE LIGHT OF THE FULL MOON TOUCHES YOU - YOU'LL BE RECALLED TO AWARENESS OF THE HORRIBLE REVENGE I'VE EXACTED FROM YOU!

**HEEE**

EMMA'S VOICE FROZE IN HER THROAT, AS SHE GAZED UPON THE GHASTLY, HATE-FILLED FACE!

YOUR DOLL! HOW DID YOU GET IT BACK? HOW?



SO - THERE'S SOMEONE HERE! A FRIEND FOR MY LITTLE EMMA, EH?



HE MADE NO SOUND- HOPING HE COULD MELT INTO THE UN-EARTHY ROOF-TOP LANDSCAPE!

I'LL FIND WHOEVER IT IS!

YOU STAY AS YOU ARE, EMMA! I COMMAND IT BY THE LEGIONS OF ASHTAROTH!

AND NOW TO PLAY A LITTLE GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK WITH YOUR MYSTERIOUS CHUM!

I CAN SENSE THE RAW FEAR...BOILING IN HIS BRAIN!

SHE CAN'T DO ANYTHING IF SHE DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM! GOTTA KEEP OUTTA SIGHT - SOMEHOW!



CANT CONTROL MY MUSCLES! SHES TOO STRONG! MAYBE - IF I GO ALONE EASY - FOR NOW - !



THAT'S RIGHT -  
DON'T TRY TO  
RESIST ME!  
JUST DO AS I  
COMMAND!



I WON'T HURT  
YOU - VERY  
MUCH. JUST  
A FEW  
SCREAMS  
BEFORE YOU  
GO! A FEW  
MINUTES OF  
BEGGING FOR  
DEATH!

I'M RIGHT ON  
THE EDGE OF  
THE BROKEN  
PART! CAN'T  
GO ANY  
FARTHER GOT  
TO MAKE HER -



WHAT'S THIS? YOU  
DARE DEFY ME?!

WHY YOU LUCKLESS  
FOOL....



WHAAA NO!



I DID IT!! SHE'S DEAD!

WITH A CRY OF JOY HE LEAPED ACROSS THE DECAYING, ROTTED ROOF TOPS! IN HIS EXCITEMENT, HE FORGOT THAT HE WAS A BRUTE - FORGOT HE WAS A CREATURE OF THE SHADOWS - FORGOT ALL BUT THE LOVELY GIRL HE HAD SAVED!



EMMA! EMMA -  
YOU'RE FREE!  
THE OLD HAS...

... SHE'S  
DEAD!

THANK YOU - WHOEVER YOU  
ARE! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

WHAT'S  
HAPPENING  
?



AT LAST I CAN GO ON INTO  
THE STREAM OF INFINITY! AT  
LAST I CAN LEAVE THIS BODY  
THAT SHOULD HAVE MOULDERED  
AGES AGO!

OH, THANK  
YOU! THANK  
... UHHH!

AND SO, IN A HANDFUL OF WIND-BLOWN DUST,  
SHE VANISHED FROM HIM, TO CONTINUE HER  
INTERRUPTED JOURNEY TO WHATEVER LIES  
BEYOND DEATH'S PORTAL.



AS FOR HIM.. AFTER A WHILE, HE LUMBERED  
OFF INTO THE GLOOM WHICH WAS HIS WORLD  
-A STRANGE, TORN DOLL GENTLY REST-  
ING IN HIS ARMS... ?



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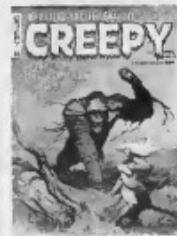
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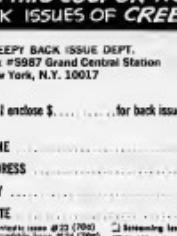
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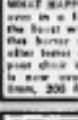
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FEELING A BIT PEAKED AFTER MY LAST FEW FRIGHT FABLES? WHAT YOU FEAR FOLLOWERS NEED IS AN OCEAN VOYAGE TO PUT A LITTLE COLOR IN YOUR CHEEKS...LIKE GREEN! ALL SET, SHIVERING SHIPMATES? JOIN ME AT THE HELM OF THE SWOLLY SHIP *RIO STAR*...HOPE YOU WON'T BE INCONVENIENCED...THEY'RE RUNNING OUT OF HANDS AND CAN ONLY USE A...

# SKELETON CREW!





ABOVE THEM, THE GULLS GAVE PIERCING SHRIEKS...BENEATH THEIR FEET, THE TIDE RHYTHMICALLY ROCKED THE STRANDED VESSEL, CREAKING AND MOANING...



MANUEL NEVER FINISHED. BOTH MEN WHIRLED AT THE NEW SOUND...A DULL, HOLLOW, ROLLING THUMP AFTER THUMP AFTER THUMP.



AH!! WHAT KIND OF SHIP IS THIS? PERHAPS SEÑOR CARPENTER, IT'S BETTER IF WE GO FOR THE AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY...

WHERE'S YOUR NERVE, BOY? WE'RE CLAIMING THIS TUB, LET'S SEE IT THROUGH!

MANUEL SHRUGGED OFF HIS FEAR. THE TWO MEN MOVED ON CAUTIOUSLY, MAKING THEIR WAY TO THE BRIDGE...THE DOOR WAS SEALED FROM THE INSIDE. AFTER SOME BATTERING, IT BURST OPEN.

JUST LIKE THE OTHERS! BONE AND A FEW SHREDS OF CLOTHES...

HE WAS WRITING IN THE LOG! PERHAPS THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT T-THIS!...

GENTLY, MANUEL SLIPPED THE RAGGED LOG BOOK FROM THE BONY FINGERS, AND LEAFED THROUGH THE PAGES. THE LAST ENTRY WAS LONG AND UNOFFICIAL, ALMOST ILLEGIBLY SCRAWLED...



HE WAS THE FIRST MATE... NAME'S THORSEN. SEEKS TO HAVE WRITTEN THIS VERY HURRIEDLY...

READ IT. SEE WHAT YOU CAN LEARN. MANUEL

...I'M GONNA CHECK OUT THE HOLD FIND OUT WHAT THE CARGO IS!



IT'S NOT FAIR WE SHOULD SAIL WITH SUCH A THING...A COFFIN ABOARD WILL JINK UP FOR CERTAIN, YOU MARK MY WORDS! BAD LUCK'S COMIN'!

"DID I REALLY SENSE SOMETHING EVEN THEN, OR WAS IT THE GRUMBLING OF AN OLD HAND LIKE DUFFY THAT SENT ME TO CAPTAIN LORCA?"

SOME OF THE CREW'S NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT PUTTING ON A DEAD MAN, SIR...

COMPANY ORDERS, MR. THORSEN. HE WAS ONE OF OUR AGENTS, BODY'S BEING RETURNED TO THE STATES. HAD A RUN-IN WITH THE INDIANS, SOMETHING ABOUT A GIRL...

THEY BELIEVE A SOUL NEEDS A PERFECT BODY TO ENJOY THE AFTERLIFE. WANTED TO MUTILATE THIS FELLOW'S CORPSE TO MAKE HIM PAY! MAIN OFFICE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER ALL AROUND TO GET THE BODY OUT... RAPIDAMENTE!



"SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THAT THE TROUBLE BEGAN.. SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN AS I WAS ABOUT TO COME OFF MY WATCH..."

DEAD? HOW COULD IT JUST GO DEAD, ALVAREZ?

QUEEN SABE, SEÑOR THORSEN? SOMETIMES THE SALT AIR GETS TO THE CRYSTALS.. I'LL LOOK INSIDE AND SEE WHAT I CAN DO!

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY LUCK BEFORE YOUR RELIEF COMES ON, ILL TELL THE CAPTAIN AND...

YAAA A AAAAA!

"THE CRY CUT THROUGH THE BREAKING DAWN LIKE A RAZOR! I RUSHED BELOW TO WHERE THE NIGHT GANG WERE WAITING THE CHANGE OF SHIFT..."

WHAT THE DEVIL GOES ON DOWN HERE??

IT'S PUFFY, SIR. WE LOCKED HIM IN THE FORWARD COMPARTMENT WITH THE COFFIN! JUSTA JOKE...

THAT OL' IRISHMAN AINT BEEN SO FEISTY SINCE HE GOT A CORPSE FOR A BUNK-MATE! HA! SCREAMING LIKE AN OLD LADY!

A FINE BUNCH OF IDIOTS! GET HIM OUT OF THERE! ...RIGHT NOW!

WE WAS JUST FOOLIN'.. YOU SHOULD'A HEARD HIM! "THE CREEPIN' BLACK SHADOW" WAS TRYING TO GET HIM... WHAT A LOT OF STUFF!

"THE LAUGHTER STOPPED SHORT AS THE HATCH SWUNG OPEN THROWING A RAY OF LIGHT INTO THE BLACKNESS. THOSE WHO'D FOUND HUMOR IN THE HYSTERICAL SHRIEKS OF MOMENTS BEFORE NOW FOUND THEMSELVES SCREAMING..."

PUFFY!  
OH, MY GOD..  
PUFFY!

"NO ONE SAID ANY MORE, BUT IT WAS I WHO FOUND THE FIRE AXE AND PUT IT TO THE HELLISH COFFIN FROM WHICH DUFFY'S DEATH HAD CREEPT FORTH..."

I-IT'S JUST  
LIKE DUFFY...

A MAN NOT DEAD A  
WEEK, NOTHIN' BUT  
BONE AND RAGS...  
AIN'T NATURAL!

"THE MORNING SUN WAS RISING AS I RACED TOPSIDE TO WAKE THE CAPTAIN. REVULSION SWIMMING WITHIN ME. THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ME TO GO TO HIS CABIN..."

CAPTAIN  
LORCA!

SCUM! PIGS!  
COWARDS!  
DESERTERS!

KAPOW!  
POW!

CAPTAIN! THOSE  
ARE OUR MEN...  
WHAT'RE THEY DOING?  
THERE ARE SHARKS  
IN THOSE WATERS!

COULDN'T STOP THEM... THEY  
HEARD THE SCREAMS AND  
GOT TO THE RADIO SHACK  
BEFORE ME! THEY SAW WHAT  
HAPPENED... THEY KNOW  
WHAT'S WRONG!



"A QUESTION FORMED ON MY TONGUE AND WAS NEVER UTTERED AS THE MORNING AIR WAS RENT BY A VOLUME OF PITIFUL SCREAMS..."

SANGRE DE CRISTO!  
DON'T QUESTION. JUST  
OBEY ME... YOU TAKE  
THE STERN, I'LL TAKE  
THE BOW..LOCK  
EVERY HATCH LEAD-  
ING ON DECK!

B-BUT THE REST  
OF THE CREW IS  
BELOW... SOME  
THING'S DOWN  
THERE...

I KNOW WHAT'S DOWN THERE!  
I SAW IN THE RADIO ROOM! IT'S  
TOO LATE TO HELP THE MEN  
BELOW!

NOW QUICKLY!  
DO AS I SAY!  
WHILE THERE'S STILL  
A CHANCE TO SAVE  
THE SHIP... AND  
OURSELVES!!



"MUTING MY EARS TO THE HORRENDOUS SHRIEKS BELOW DECK, I RUSHED TO COMPLETE MY TASK, SLAMMING HATCH AFTER HATCH...AND SO PASSED THE RADIO ROOM...ALVAREZ HAD LOCATED THE TROUBLE; THE LAST THING HE DID ON EARTH!"



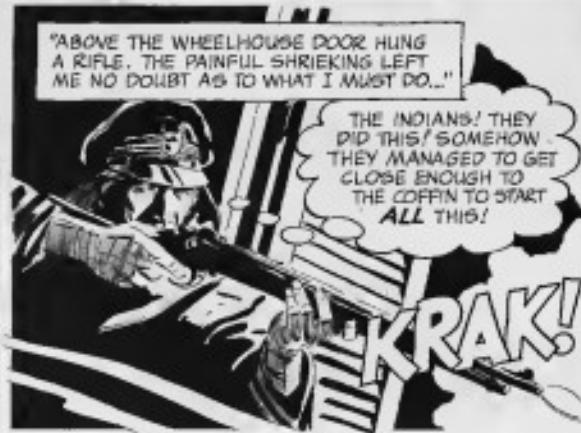
"WITH ALL REAR HATCHES SECURED, I CLAMBERED TO THE BRIDGE EXPECTING TO MEET THE CAPTAIN...THE SOUND OF GUNSHOTS TOLD ME HE'D BEEN UNABLE TO GET ALL THE BOW HATCHES..."



"THE SCREAMS WERE NOT THE END WITH THE RISING SUN TO ITS BACK, SOMETHING CAME STAGGERING ACROSS THE DECK, VAGUELY MAN-LIKE BUT WITH A SKIN OF SHINING WRITHING BLACKNESS...YET THE VOICE, THE HIDEOUS TORTURED VOICE...WAS THAT OF THE CAPTAIN!"



"ABOVE THE WHEELHOUSE DOOR HUNG A RIFLE, THE PAINFUL SHRIEKING LEFT ME NO DOUBT AS TO WHAT I MUST DO..."



"THE WHEELHOUSE IS COMPLETELY SEALED OFF, I HAVE SET THE SHIP ON A COURSE FOR SHORE. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE I WILL MAKE IT, YET STILL I WRITE...IT TAKES MY MIND OFF...OFF WHAT'S WAITING OUT THERE! BUT NOW SOMETHING OCCURS TO ME...SOMETHING..."



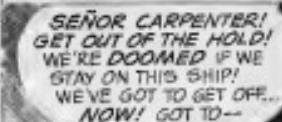
MANUEL CLOSED THE BOOK. THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO READ. THE SUN BEAT THROUGH THE GLASS OF THE WHEELHOUSE ITS HEAT MAGNIFIED, YET MANUEL FOUND HIMSELF SHIVERING...



HE SHIFTED UNCOMFORTABLY AND SOMETHING CRUNCHED UNDERFOOT... FOR THE FIRST TIME, MANUEL BECAME AWARE OF WHAT LITTERED THE FLOOR OF THE WHEELHOUSE...



SUDDENLY MANUEL UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING... HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE CREEPING HORROR THAT HAD TURNED THE FREIGHTER RIO STAR INTO A SHIP OF HELL!



AND JUST AS SUDDENLY, THERE WAS NO PLACE TO RUN. MANUEL STARED OUT AT A WRITHING, CRAWLING SEA OF GLEAMING EBONY WHOSE LEAD POINT WAS WHAT REMAINED OF CARPENTER... WARRIOR ANTS! CONSTANTLY FORAGING ANTS OF THE BRAZILIAN JUNGLE WHO EAT ANY FLESH OR FOOD FALLING IN THEIR JUGGERNAUT PATH... AND GO ON FOR MORE! JUST AS THEY DID WHEN THEY FINISHED THE CORPSE IN THE COFFIN WHERE THE INDIANS HAD PLACED THEM... WARRIOR ANTS!!



SO MUCH FOR NAUSEATING NATURE STUDY, EH, KIDDIES? JUST THINK... THE BOYS WENT ABOARD TO GET THE CARGO, AND IT GETS THEM! ALL THEY GET ARE ANTS IN THEIR PANTS... AMONG OTHER PLACES!

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